

our own more specialized efforts. Last year, you may remember, we were proffered the privilege of membership in the International Council of Women; this year we have a similar invitation from the International Council of Nurses, which is one of the outcomes of last year's meeting, and which in itself goes to show that American nurses are by no means alone in feeling the need for organization. Indeed, the work that nurses are achieving along these lines in other countries makes interesting and inspiring reading and brings home to each one of us convincingly the importance of personal loyalty, personal interest, and personal work, without which we can never hope to attain the full measure of success. At our first annual meeting Miss Dolliver put the case exactly when she said, "So long as there is one graduate who is not with us we are weak by so much as her mind, character, and influence are valued at." If we do not take care of our own affairs, rest assured that outsiders will undertake the task for us to our everlasting undoing and to the detriment of the public, whose sick we have the privilege of ministering to.

Whether we shall take up or lay aside our professional responsibilities is not a matter of choice, but a question of duty and conscience. Do you think it right that any one of us, who have come to a clear understanding of the seriousness and importance of nursing work, should go her separate way and take her own ease and pleasure while there is even one human life imperilled for the want of good nursing? Can we be still and let things just take their own way so long as the stamp of mediocrity marks a work to which should be given the best and highest that the hands, hearts, and minds of women can bring to it? This is no work that can be taken up lightly or laid aside carelessly by the first-comer, but one that should be intrusted only to women, each one of whom should be ordained a priestess, as it were, before she presumes to enter into the temple to perform her ministries unto sick and suffering humanity.

OUR FLOATING HOSPITALS

BY CHARLOTTE MANDEVILLE PERRY

THIS great charity has been in existence a quarter of a century. It originated in the attempt to rescue sick children from unwholesome, often fatal, surroundings, where during the summer months child-disease runs rampant, and to place them under conditions favorable to recovery.

The attempt first expressed itself in excursion trips, sea-shore homes, and summer outings by the salt water,—the sea-breezes possessing a wonderfully restorative as well as tonic effect. But this only afforded

temporary relief. They were the small beginnings which afterwards resulted in the finely organized corporations of New York City and of Boston,—now composed of influential, wealthy, and kindly-disposed persons. These first ventures appealed strongly to people generally.

St. John's Guild (501 Fifth Avenue) is the "Mother House," so to speak, of the Floating Hospital in New York. In 1874 this Guild, strong in its convictions as to the potential value of such a scheme, made the initial trip down the harbor in a barge hired for the purpose.

The next year, 1875, the ship, afterwards named the *Emma Abbott*, from its chief donor, inaugurated the Floating Hospital proper, making three trips weekly, later increased to six. This was Floating Hospital No. 1, which position it retained in a unique sense for some time. New York now has two ships, No. 2 being the *Helen C. Juilliard*, which was launched with impressive ceremonies May 4, 1899, much enthusiasm, courtesy, and co-operation being evinced on all sides. These boats are modelled according to requirements,—fire-proof, minus machinery, of course, which relieves them of noise and motion and contributes space, every inch of which it is necessary to utilize. The decks are divided off into wards, with a proportion of permanent beds, which necessitates a night as well as a day service. The system of arrangement and management is similar to the hospital with its staff of doctors and nurses. The expense for the daily trip is two hundred and fifty dollars.

Limited space will not permit a detailed account. Suffice it to say that children, with their mothers, appear in large numbers daily, are examined for admission, and are sometimes turned away for lack of accommodation as well as for contagious disease,—the only limitations excepting that of age,—no child over six years being eligible. Those who are acquainted with the slums of New York, or of any large city, will be able to see what a life-saving device is this most humane endeavor to snatch, as it were, little suffering ones from hotbeds of disease, filth, and all that smothers life or renders it useless. Mothers also are found to be, through the mother-instinct, both accessible and teachable.

Our own city of Boston was first inspired to lay hold of this effective means of saving life through the Rev. Rufus B. Tobey, whose attention was drawn to child-mortality and the need of checking it through certain lines of work carried on in his own church. He became acquainted with the New York Floating Hospital and saw what a great work they were already accomplishing. It was through his efforts and the hearty response of those whose interest he awakened that in 1894 the first trip was made in our waters. Owing to the early interest which Dr. Hale took in the project, the Boston Floating Hospital became a department of the Lend-a-Hand Society. It was incorporated in 1896.

Since the start progress has taken great strides in all the appointments and management of our Floating Hospital, which has been remodelled and improved as occasion and the increase of the work demanded. One special feature is the introduction of the atmospheric plant, by which the temperature is regulated. A cool day can be manufactured even in the face of a very hot one, and by the reversal of machinery too cool a temperature raised to the desired degree. One cannot but be impressed by the fact of the Floating Hospital being an expensive form of charity. This plant involved a great outlay; but marvellous results testify to its being a most valuable factor in the work. Another large item is the laundry, clothes of all kinds being supplied for the babies,—yet no one will question the good done by demonstrating cleanliness. No stone seems to have been left unturned in rendering the work thorough and permanent. The kindness shown the mothers, it is expected, will reflect upon the children. At a certain time these mothers meet in the dietary department to receive instruction which will help them in their homes. Here twenty different kinds of infant food are prepared, after the prescription of the doctor, including beef-juice and egg albumen preparations, besides various cream-mixtures. The benefits of sterilization are demonstrated and bottles sold at a minimum cost.

It was found expedient to accept infants who were known to be in a moribund condition. Also it became apparent that the work would be curtailed if well children under six, who could not be left alone, were not received, as they would be the cause of depriving their sick little brother or sister of its only chance of life. A kindergarten was introduced, which, though it is somewhat irregular at present, proves very helpful in keeping the well children quiet and happy.

Graduate nurses who feel drawn to this work will be glad to know that the Floating Hospital offers this experience as a post-graduate course. Lectures are given, and diplomas awarded where examinations are successfully passed.

It is to be observed that the Floating Hospital is a high order of service, and it is an absolutely ascertained fact that skilled physicians and nurses are indispensable to the real success of the work. Miss Wilbur, superintendent of nurses, who has a staff of twenty-five at present, has endeavored to secure nurses of good standing.

There are many ways of helping on this grand work,—two suggestions will be mentioned here: The first is to encourage skilled service; and the other, to throw one's influence towards securing an endowment fund. At present the Floating Hospital is immediately dependent on the voluntary contributions of those interested. No one has gained greater success in bringing the work and its needs before the attention

of many than Mrs. Whitman, who is indefatigable in the cause. Boston has been hearty in its response. The amount for endowing a bed or "naming a trip" was given as too small at the outset,—viz., one hundred dollars. In New York it is five hundred, although their daily expenses exceed ours. There, too, the same need exists for establishing the work on a permanent financial basis through an endowment fund, it having been possible last year, as with us, merely to keep out of debt, with little or nothing in the treasury. This year we have been told of the urgent demand for funds to complete the work, showing increased capacity as well as needs.

[NOTE.—Information concerning the Floating Hospital can be had by writing to the following persons: Mrs. M. C. Whitman, Lend-a-Hand Society Office, 1 Beacon Street, and Rev. Rufus B. Tobey, 178 Devonshire Street.]

OBSTETRICAL EMERGENCIES

By HENRY D. FRY, M.D.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

"THE obstetric nurse is the *oldest* and the *newest* of nurses."

First, she is the oldest because she antedates the history of medicine. People in the early ages succumbed to diseases; submitted to surgical operations, crude though the operations were; yet we have no record of medical or surgical nurses. Not so, however, with the obstetric nurse, or as she was called, the man-wife or midwife. Her labors are recorded in what is acknowledged to be the most ancient complete book in existence,—viz., Genesis. This was written about four thousand years ago. We are informed (chap. xxxv. 16-19) that "Rachel travailed, and she had hard labor. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. And Rachel died."

Here, in the first record of her work, we have the nurse encouraging the parturient woman, but "higher criticism" might point out the unfortunate fact that she lost her first case.

Again, in chapter xxxviii. (27-30), describing Tamar's accouchement, it says, "And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb.

"And it came to pass, when she travailed, that the one put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first.